

Georgia[®] Department of Community Affairs

March 2016



Community Done Right success stories are a result of local governments adopting a partnership attitude with DCA and with each other and are examples to follow for all Georgia communities.

REGION 6:

Perry, a community on a mission to transform housing

The Perry Housing Team is entering its third and final year as a Georgia Initiative for Community Housing (GICH) community. After many successes in the first two years, including a highly effective neighborhood cleanup program, Perry GICH is looking toward its junior year as the best year yet with a variety of strategies in the works.

GICH offers communities a three-year program of collaboration and technical assistance related to housing and community development. The objective of the Initiative is to help communities create and launch a locally-based plan to meet their housing needs.

IN THE NEWS

Town of Thunderbolt designated as Georgia's 29th WaterFirst[®] Community

Thunderbolt joins elite group committed to strategic planning with a focus on sound water resource management



At a ceremony filled with Thunderbolt's water stewardship team on March 9, Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) officials announced the designation of the state's twenty-ninth WaterFirst Community. Many community leaders and local and state officials attended the ceremony held at the Thunderbolt City Council meeting.

"Thunderbolt has joined an exclusive group of communities committed to water stewardship," said DCA Community Development Division Director Rusty Haygood. "The state's WaterFirst communities have a demonstrated track record of implementing solidly-developed strategic plans that support long-term excellence in water resource management."

The WaterFirst Community Program, led by the DCA's Office of Planning and Environmental Management, is a voluntary partnership between local governments, state and federal agencies and other organizations working to improve the management and protection of shared water resources.

Throughout this process as a GICH community, Perry has pursued projects and programs that will have a meaningful and sustainable impact on neighborhoods and the community. The team believes its efforts will help cement its legacy as a critical community partner while positioning the organization for continued work beyond the formal GICH eligibility period.

According to team leader Robert Smith, "The Perry Housing Team looks at our junior year in the GICH program as just the beginning, and we look forward to our continued efforts in the community."



The Perry Housing Team hopes to rehabilitate blighted residential properties like these in Sand Hill through the GICH program.



Like most other volunteer-driven community organizations, funding is scarce for the Perry Housing Team and its initiatives. For this reason, the team is constantly looking to leverage outside resources to promote neighborhood improvements.

This year Perry GICH is focusing on Sand Hill, a neighborhood in the downtown area, by working to develop and implement a comprehensive housing rehabilitation and reconstruction effort. In order to provide



"Impressive for such a small town," said the state's WaterFirst® reviewers of Thunderbolt's stewardship and planning work.

Haygood added that earning this designation took a lot of effort and required significant teamwork and that the review team was especially impressed by Thunderbolt's tree inventory and tree ordinance. He continued by saying that the city has a small but impressive staff committed to environmental excellence through their devotion to countywide activities that manage and protect water resources and that they have created an enhanced land development process to ensure the community's key issues are addressed.

Previously designated WaterFirst communities include the City of Auburn, Athens-Clark County, City of Braselton, Cobb County, Cobb/Marietta Water Authority, Columbus Waterworks/ Columbus Consolidated Government, City of Cornelia, Coweta County, Forsyth County, Fulton County, City of Gainesville, City of Garden City, City of Griffin, Gwinnett County, City of Hartwell, Henry County/Henry County W&S Authority, City of Hinesville, City of Loganville, Newton County and its municipalities, Oconee County, City of Rome, City of Roswell, City of Savannah, Douglasville/Douglas County WSA, City of Tifton/Tift County, City of Tybee Island, and City of Winder.

[Click here for more information about DCA's WaterFirst program.](#)

Or contact WaterFirst Program Coordinator Deatre Denion at (912) 704-4136 or at Deatre.denion@dca.ga.gov.

2016 Leadership Development Program graduates ten from DCA and GSFC



the necessary funding for this effort, the City of Perry is partnering with the team and Grant Specialists of Georgia, Inc. in developing and submitting applications for funding for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Housing and Community HOME Investment Program (CHIP) programs. If approved, these programs will provide approximately \$800,000 to be utilized for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of targeted residential properties in Sand Hill.

There are multiple supporting efforts underway in the Sand Hill neighborhood, many of which are being driven by other organizations in Perry such as Perry Volunteer Outreach (PVO), The Fuller Center for Housing, Habitat for Humanity, and churches in the community. Other concurrent efforts on behalf of the Perry Housing Team include a community-wide Housing Assessment, the development and implementation of a Downtown Development Plan, the integration of Form-Based Code in Perry's developmental regulations, and general community outreach and education. It is the team's hope that all of these efforts will coalesce into an improved Sand Hill and Perry.

DCA stands ready to and actively provides facilitation and on-going technical assistance to the team through its community services team and housing outreach team representatives. Assistance includes participation in monthly meetings, retreats, and housing fairs.

Tonya Mole, DCA's Community Services Team Representative for Region 6, said of the Perry Housing Team's efforts, "Through the GICH program, the City of Perry created a community vision focused on building partnerships and planning initiatives, as well as a focus on revitalization efforts, which opened the door to various funding opportunities."

For more information on initiatives like this one as well as other program opportunities offered through the Georgia Department of Community Affairs in Region 6, contact Tonya at tonya.mole@dca.ga.gov.

DCA Deputy Commissioner of Housing Carmen Chubb, far left, and DCA Commissioner Camila Knowles, far right, joined Leadership Development Program graduates to celebrate their accomplishments in March. From left, DCA's 2016 LDP graduates are Krista Mitchell, Sara Martinez, Christy Fletcher, Erica Etterling and Wesley Brooks.

Administrators and colleagues from the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) and the Georgia Student Finance Commission (GSFC) gathered on March 15 to honor ten graduates from their joint 2015-16 Leadership Development Program (LDP). The initiative is focused on enhancing the managerial effectiveness of existing mid-level managers and developing a strong pool of potential managers of managers at both State agencies.

Managers who have the desire to grow professionally by discovering and strengthening their influence and leadership skills are encouraged to apply for the LDP each year, and final candidates are chosen from each agency based upon a writing exercise, interview, and impromptu presentation.

According to DCA Division Director of Administration Al Howell, the program relies heavily on a "learn by doing" approach to teach participants important leadership concepts over the course of six months. The centerpiece of this approach is the assignment of each participant to a challenge project that allows them to put these concepts into practice. Howell says a great challenge project should address an important and pressing business problem, be valuable and impactful to DCA or GSFC, and be rewarding for the LDP candidate.

Each program participant forms a cross-functional team of colleagues to study the issue of their respective projects and offers ideas and suggestions as to how the problem can be addressed. This activity gives each participant the opportunity to practice leadership skills they have learned during the program. Over the past several years, DCA has used LDP challenge projects to generate ideas and drive innovation across the Agency.

Joined by GSFC President Tricia Chastain at the ceremony, DCA Commissioner Knowles said to the graduates, "We're looking to the future for both DCA and Georgia Student Finance. Through the Leadership Development Program, you are preparing yourselves for greater roles in management. And we are excited by what we see in all of you. Your participation in the program makes our agencies better."

Kevin Paul Scott, co-founder of the ADDO Institute, which works specifically in the areas of global leadership, student leadership, and thought leadership, entertained and motivated the graduates and DCA and GSFC administrators with his keynote presentation at the awards luncheon.

DCA's 2015-16 program graduates are Senior Policy Analyst Wesley Brooks, Portfolio Compliance Manager Erica Etterling, Program Manager Christy Fletcher, Legal Consultant Sara Martinez, and Field Operations Manager Krista Mitchell.

GSFC's 2015-16 program graduates are Call Center Supervisor Alice Aka, Senior Financial Analyst Anita Bathija, REACH Executive Director Marjie

IN OTHER NEWS



PlanFirst applications due May 15

DCA's **PlanFirst** program recognizes and rewards effective plan implementation by communities throughout the state.

"A fully thought-out plan, with ambitious yet achievable goals, is extremely important in steering a community into a prosperous future," says DCA Planning Outreach Coordinator Adriane Wood. "The PlanFirst program recognizes those communities and rewards them for shaping their own futures together."

The 2017 class of Georgia's PlanFirst communities will be the third in the program. The inaugural group of ten communities were named in 2015, with seven additional communities joining the program in January 2016.

To be eligible to apply, a community must be a qualified local government (QLG), be up to date with its mandated reporting to DCA, and have met the minimum performance standards as set forth in their regional commission's regional plan.

Any size community may apply, as long as the community has made significant strides toward implementing its established work program.

Dickey, Senior Manager of Government & External Relations Chris Green, and Senior Manager of the 529 Plan Cassandra Sherrill.



DCA's 2016 Leadership Development Program participants are joined here by their fellow graduates and peers from the Georgia Student Finance Commission.

DCA IN THE LIMELIGHT

DCA's big screen moments in February and March

Video highlights from TV & online news



CDBG news: A Valdosta family recently celebrated the joy of moving back into their own rebuilt home -- once deemed unsafe for occupancy -- with a ribbon cutting event in February. Located in a designated revitalization area, the house is one of six projects completed using DCA's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds within the past year.

[See the story here on WCTV.tv.](#)

Housing tax credit news: Macon and Bibb County will use \$6 million in housing tax credits from DCA to redevelop the former Henry A. Hunt Elementary School into the Hunt School Village. The blighted area will be transformed into safe and affordable rental housing for seniors ages 62 and older.

[Watch the story from WMGT-41 here.](#)

AmeriCorps news: Student volunteers from Clayton State University spent their Spring Break week "greening up" an historic district in need of revitalization in Brownsville, Fla. Georgia's AmeriCorps program is DCA-

Designation as a PlanFirst community comes with rewards. The incentives available to those communities include, but are not limited to:

- *annual CDBG application eligibility for non-entitlement communities;*
- *reductions on basis points for various DCA and GEFA programs;*
- *other incentives listed on the PlanFirst web page.*

If your community wishes to apply and would like to speak to someone about the program, please contact adriane.wood@dca.ga.gov.

[Click here for the PlanFirst program application and more information available on DCA's website.](#)

ARC's POWER initiative to invest \$65.8 million across 13 states



The 37 counties in Georgia's Appalachian Region may apply for funds through the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) and the U.S. Economic Development Administration to develop new strategies for economic growth and worker advancement.

The ARC's POWER initiative will invest \$65.8 million across the 13-state ARC region in communities that have historically relied on the coal economy for economic stability.

Any community or organization in Georgia's ARC region choosing to apply for POWER funds must show that the coal economy has had a negative impact through the closure of coal-fired plants, or reductions in sales and/or labor in coal-related transportation, logistics and manufacturing supply chains.

administered and sponsored with close to 10,000 volunteers who serve each year.

[WEAR-3 in Pensacola has the story.](#)

HomeSafe Georgia news: DCA Commissioner Knowles joined U.S. Congressman David Scott to promote the 13th Annual Jobs Fair, scheduled for April 1 in College Park, in a live segment on the CBS46 "Atlanta PluggedIN" show on March 29. DCA's HomeSafe Georgia program is an event partner and will deliver on-site assistance to homeowners in danger of foreclosure.

[See the CBS46 interview here.](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS & OPPORTUNITIES

HomeSafe Georgia: April & May events



April events

April 1: Congressman David Scott's 13th Annual Jobs Fair from 10:00 AM - 3:00 PM at the Georgia International Convention Center, 2000 Convention Center Concourse, in Atlanta (College Park)

April 19: 1st Annual Spring Job Fair from 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM at the 12Stone Church, 2050 Sugarloaf Circle, in Duluth

April 20: 2016 SCTC Career Fair from 12:00 - 2:00 PM at Southern Crescent Technical College, 501 Varsity Road, in Griffin

May event

May 3: Veterans Job Fair from 9:30 AM - 2:30 PM at the Fort Gordon Army Reserve Bldg., 14401 Lane Avenue and 15th Street, in Augusta

About HomeSafe Georgia

It is a free, state government program to help homeowners who are unemployed, underemployed or face other types of financial hardships save their homes from foreclosure. There is no cost to apply and no fee if approved. A homeowner who has experienced a financial hardship within the last four years -- such as the loss of a job or wages, military service, death of a spouse, or medical problems -- may be eligible for assistance.

For more information, visit www.HomeSafeGeorgia.com.

Funds are available for a range of activities including:

- *developing projects that diversify local and regional economies, create jobs in new and/or existing industries, attract new sources of job-creating investment, and provide a range of workforce services and skills training;*
- *building partnerships to attract and invest in the economic future of coal-impacted communities; and*
- *increasing capacity and other technical assistance fostering long-term economic growth and opportunity in coal-impacted communities.*

Additional information about the POWER Initiative, including application materials, is available at www.arc.gov/power or www.eda.gov/power. Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis. Awards will be announced later this year.

For details, contact DCA's ARC Program Manager Annaka Woodruff at Annaka.Woodruff@dca.ga.gov.

HUD awards funds to over 140 projects to curb homelessness in Georgia



U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Secretary Julian Castro recently announced nearly \$1.6 billion in grants to assist thousands of local homeless assistance programs across the country and to over 140 local projects in Georgia.

Balance of State Continuum of Care:

Regional meetings announced for homeless services community

Assistance to Georgia's homeless population is provided through the Continuum of Care network, or CoCs for short. There are eight CoCs in the state that serve local areas. If you are not in those areas, assistance is provided through the Balance of State CoC which covers 152 of Georgia's 159 counties.

DCA will hold three Balance of State CoC regional meetings in April in Norcross (Gwinnett Co.), Macon (Bibb Co.), and Tifton (Tift Co.). The meetings will focus on federal requirements for the homeless services community such as system performance and coordinated entry. Interested non-profit organizations and local governments are encouraged to participate.

The meetings will provide information on system performance and other requirements and priorities of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) as well as opportunities for Balance of State CoC members and other homeless service providers to discuss coordination practices and help plan coordinated entry.

Please note that the Balance of State CoC jurisdiction excludes Augusta-Richmond, Atlanta, Athens-Clarke, Cobb, Columbus-Muscogee, DeKalb, Fulton and Savannah-Chatham.

Upcoming regional meetings:

Norcross - Monday, April 18, 10:00am - 12:00pm

Macon - Wednesday, April 20, 10:00am - 12:00pm

Tifton - Thursday, April 21, 10:00am - 12:00pm

For more information on these meetings, contact Tina Moore at tina.moore@dca.ga.gov or (404) 327-6870.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FINANCING

February 2016 Financial Awards

Region 2: Habersham County

The City of Cornelia was awarded \$500,000 in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Employment Incentive Program (EIP) funds to assist with the construction of public water system improvements to serve Fieldale Farms Corporation's existing poultry processing facility. Fieldale Farms plans to expand the Cornelia plant by 199,000 square feet within 24 months, creating 200 net, new, permanent jobs over and above the existing 1,300 and invest approximately \$35,000,000.

HUD's Continuum of Care (CoC) grants provide permanent and transitional housing to meet the needs of individuals and families experiencing homelessness.

Through these awards, the Georgia Balance of State CoC, which covers 152 of Georgia's 159 counties, was awarded \$14 million in funding for 59 projects. Georgia DCA was also awarded 24 Shelter plus Care renewal projects in other Continuum of Care across the state.

[Click here to access the HUD funding notice.](#)



Region 9: Laurens County

The City of Dublin was awarded \$500,000 in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to make sewer system improvements benefiting 543 persons of whom 472 are low- to moderate-income. The application proposes \$358,237 in match and leverage funds.

Region 10: Mitchell County

Sale City was awarded \$324,667 in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to make water distribution system improvements, benefiting 65 persons of whom 48 are low- to moderate-income. The application proposes \$20,000 in match and leverage funds.

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[*Camila Knowles, Commissioner*](#)